

# NCES DOVE UPDATE

DATA ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE NCES TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL (TRP) ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION



## **PROGRESS ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE U.S.**

We are hard at work on the next edition of *Vocational Education in the United States*, which will describe trends in vocational, technical, and career education at both the secondary and postsecondary levels, and will take a look at longitudinal outcomes for high school students. In this DOVE Update, we discuss some of the issues we've encountered and decisions we've made regarding the secondary and longitudinal analyses. We will present preliminary findings for these and other analyses at the DOVE TRP meeting in August.

### **Trends in High School Coursetaking: 1990–2000**

We are updating recent NCES analyses of high school vocational/technical coursetaking, as well as the academic coursetaking of participants in vocational/technical education, by examining trends over the decade from 1990 to 2000, using the High School Transcript Studies (HSTS). One change we have made since the last reports is to define an occupational concentrator as a high school graduate who earned 3.0 or more credits in one of the following 18 program areas:

- Agriculture and Renewable Resources
- Business Services
- Business Management
- Marketing
- Child Care and Education
- Health Care
- Communications Technology
- Computer Technology
- Other Technology
- Construction
- Mechanics and Repair
- Precision Production
- Transportation
- Food Service and Hospitality
- Protective and Public Services
- Personal and Other Services

Previously, these programs were collapsed into 10 broad areas. In addition to occupational concentrators, we will also focus on "occupational explorers" who earn 3.0 or more occupational credits but do not concentrate their coursetaking in a single program area. Finally, we will examine the coursetaking patterns of students based on their number of accumulated occupational credits. As mentioned in the last DOVE newsletter, we plan to hold a meeting on August 9 to revise the above program classification for future reports, and will be sending information and invitations out soon.

### **High School Offerings as of 2002**

Using the new Education Longitudinal Study (ELS) of 2002, we will describe the number and types of high schools offering different vocational/technical programs, as well as the number and characteristics of the 10th-graders who attended these schools. For the first time in a while, we will be able to describe and compare offerings at full-time vocational high schools, high schools served by an area vocational school or center, as well as other high schools.

### **What Happened to the Class of 1992?**

We will examine the post-high school experiences of the Class of 1992 through the year 2000, using the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) Fourth Follow-up Survey. As with the HSTS analysis described at left, we will focus on the post-high school experiences of occupational concentrators, occupational explorers, and other graduates, as well as students accumulating different numbers of occupational credits. One of the advantages of NCES's longitudinal surveys is the rich background data collected on students. These data will enable us to control for prior academic achievement (test quartile) and socioeconomic status (also in quartiles) as of the 8th grade, when examining student outcomes.

### **What Happened to the Class of 2000?**

In the hope of providing longitudinal outcomes data for a more recent cohort of high school graduates, we investigated using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) Round 5 Data. It has been NCES practice for some years to use transcript data to identify participants in vocational/technical education, rather than relying on student self-reports of high school courses and programs. Unfortunately, the current NLSY transcript file does not contain standardized credits across schools, nor did the survey ask schools the information necessary for standardizing those credits. Consequently, we had to forego using the transcripts. Instead, we decided to focus on a more limited analysis examining the post-high school experiences of students who participated in Tech Prep. To create a fairly reliable Tech Prep participation variable, we will match student reports of participation with school reports of offerings for the Class of 2000.



## **SUMMER 2004 DOVE TRP MEETING**

The next annual DOVE TRP meeting will be held on August 10–11, 2004, at One Washington Circle Hotel in D.C. To reserve a hotel room, please call Maria West at MPR Associates at (510) 849-4942 or email her at [mwest@mprinc.com](mailto:mwest@mprinc.com).